united communities. Each of these communities was undoubtedly, in a sense, sovereign, for the political power held by it had not been derived from, and was not held under, any political superior. Each of them was also an autonomous community. But as a matter of fact no one of them had ever existed or acted, was then claiming to exist or act, or did then in fact exist or act, as an independent nation. Existing and acting in union, they, together, constituted, a new nation, of which they were the sovereign rulers. This nation was composed of the thirteen States; but each State preserved its identity; the people of all the States never acted (*in- vmtwe*, all political action wan taken by the States; the Constitution was adopted by the States, each acting individually.

Yet there was but one nation. The powers actually exercised by the States severally, stopped a long way short of those belonging to a nation. All international relations were assumed by the States acting together,—as a single nation.

2. It may be noted, in this connection that the secessionists of 1861 did not use the word nations as applying to the original thirteen States; they preferred to speak of them an sovereign States. But there is no middle term. Every civilized community

must be, in the nature of things, either a nation or [redacted] a part of a nation; and the fact was, that these thirteen States, sovereign in the sense above explained, being, as they wore, united at the very moment when their independent political existence began, constituted together one nation,—known then and always as the United States of America.